

644.6.15
THE
KELLYAD:
OR A
CRITICAL EXAMINATION
INTO THE
MERITS of THESPIS.

By LOUIS STAMMA.

K
Who steals my Purse, steals Trash, 'tis something, nothing,
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been Slave to Thousands;
But he that filches from me my good Name,
Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO.

L O N D O N:

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KELLY A.D.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

MEETS OF THE H.P.S.

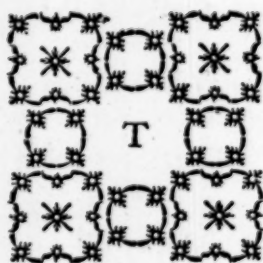


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T H E
K E L L Y A D.



H O' "bold the task in this discerning age,"
To censure justly or applaud the stage,
To sink, or to exalt each actor's fame,
Approve with candor, or with justice blame,
Yet the weak Bard attempts in humble verse,
Their merits or de-merits to rehearse ;
Attempts impartially to tune his lays,
And scorns to flatter where he cannot praise.

Then say, thou little great Hibernian sage,
What urg'd thy pen to criticise the stage?
Did rising merit dawning into light,
Contract thy balls, or dim thy lesser fight?

Or did thy envious thy malignant eyes,
Repine to see another's merit rise?

To make perfection was not nature's plan,
He merits praise who does the best he can ;
And did you view yourself as nature ought,
You'd strike your breast and cry—who's free from fault ?
Each thing in life this sad misfortune shows,
The greatest merit has the greatest foes ;
And for some trifling faults, 'tis very hard
To be condemn'd by ev'ry snarling bard.
If wit, surpassing mine, thou hast in store,
'Tis thine to bless the hand that gave thee more,
And not minutely nature's bounties trace,
Or scan her separate gifts to human race.
Heaven must know best, who form'd all nature's plan,
Why man should differ more or less from man,
And from this truth arises our mistake,
Man would be pure, could man himself but make,

But

But now to Drury let me cast an eye,
Survey the stage, and candidly descry
Such whose performances excite our lays.
Demand our censure, or deserve our praise.

If love to sympathise our nature moves,
Who is not moved when *Garrick* breathes he loves?
Or who conceives a man depress'd by woe,
And views him not in frantic *Romeo*?
Who more than him a madman can appear,
Thro' all the hapless scenes of crazy *Lear*?
Alike in comedy he charms our sight,
And ravishes an audience with delight.

There needs but *Drugger* to confirm a proof,
When peels of laughter rend the vaulted roof,
So strikingly depicts the simple elf,
He strains a smile from gravity itself;
Perfect in all, he pleases different ways,
Alike engaging in each part he plays.

The next in merit, as the next in fame,
I blush not here to mention *Powell's* name.
If action just, the master-piece of art,
Is deem'd in playing one expressive part ;
If justly us'd, it does our passions raise,
And with redoubled force the sense conveys,
If it awakes the passions of the mind,
When properly to proper accents join'd,
Let here the Poet be the candid friend,
Applaud his talents and the art commend.
Tho' envy should at this his judgment rail,
And strive o'er truth and justice to prevail,
Still to his praise I will my pen devote,
Nor dread the author who a *Thespis* wrote.
Had *Powell* trod the stage some twenty years,
He might appear what *Garrick* now appears ;
He might have equally with justice charmd,
And like himself each tender bosom warm'd.

Forc'd from the adamantine heart a sigh,
And caus'd a trickling tear to dim the eye,
Rouz'd in the gen'rous breast the turgid fire,
While art withdrew for nature to admire.
Who more than *Powell* pictures out despair
In *Alexander's* wild distorted air?
When at his nod he awes the trembling world,
And passions seem in great confusion hurl'd:
Then view in *Powell* how his active soul,
Depicts a conqueror above controul,
How nature glows within his lab'ring breast,
By pride, by love, or by revenge deprest;
How art when *Powell* gives a gentle touch,
Tho' short of nature, yet attracts as much,
Steals with resistless force upon the heart,
While gazing crowds applaud the matchless part.
Mark in *Posthumus* with what manly air,
He dares the traitor to betray the fair,
How in concern his flashing eye-balls roll,
What various passions agitate his soul,

How struggling in a sea of doubt and pain,
 He waves the judgment working in his brain,
 Nor can (tho' slander tempt) a thought conceive,
 Heaven form'd a frame so perfect to deceive.

Let *Holland* next to *Powell* take his place,
 And third in merit, *Drury's* annals grace.
 In *Osman's* form he melts a heart of steel,
 And jealous madmen every symptom feel;
 Such moving accents in each sentence dwell,
 Few can (if any) his perfections tell.
 The imitative sweet melodious tone
 Of *Garrick's* voice affects a heart of stone;
 But O! what matchless genius is display'd,
 When *Pierre* by thoughtless *Jaffier* is betray'd;
 See on his face the crimson blushes rise,
 And while he views the traitor, doubts his eyes.
 What poignant woes his lab'ring bosom rend,
 How much he suffers for a faithless friend,

Tho' captive led his pardon to receive,
He scorns the perjur'd *Jaffier* to outlive;
Mark then those features which were once serene,
How fast they glow and discompose his mien,
How in a moment, or a smaller space,
They rack ten thousand ways his manly face:
In whom but *Holland* do we justly find,
Iago's figure, with *Iago's* mind;
See on his visage every feature cramp'd,
Each type of villain on his forehead stamp'd,
So well he copies from the author's plan,
See *Holland* act you must conceive the man.

With justice after these preceding three,
We must acknowledge, as an actor, *Lee*,
And tho' his talents were obscur'd, conceal'd;
They met the warmest plaudits when reveal'd;
In all he plays he our attention draws,
And forces nature to espouse his cause.

In *Lycon* none his judgment can excel,
For justly speaking, or for acting well;
In artless strains, with unaffected ease,
Without design, he has the pow'r to please,
No character for want of genius marring,
Yet often sense in his expression jars.

But here the modest Muse without offence,
Presumes impartially to speak her sense,
Not as a critic, but a candid friend,
Who points out errors, and directs to mend.
If *Lee's* perfections were not always known,
If he has been unnotic'd by the town,
Ask who for that misfortune is to blame,
Pride answers, 'twas himself conceal'd his fame;
For had that pride once known a just degree,
Would gen'rous *Garrick* have neglected *Lee*?
No! priz'd his worth, and hung to public view,
That merit which his restless soul o'erthrew.

A modest pride there is becomes a man,
 But then it must not launch from reason's plan;
 For when it does, this maxim is a rule,
 The man of parts is lost behind the fool,
 And as fair truth the Poet's verse should grace,
 He will, unaw'd, each imperfection trace,
 Applaud desert, screen errors where he can,
 And satirise the foibles—not the man.

If mirth and drollery upon the stage,
 Have power a list'ning audience to engage,
 If from such objects our enchanted sight,
 Receives a fund of pleasure and delight,
 Justly may *Yates* theatric laurels wear,
 Who in each part confirms the finish'd play'r;
 Who more than him in *Oakly's* manly strains,
 Such favour from a crowded audience gains?
 Or would you *Wronghead* in perfection see,
 View him in *Yates*, and wond'ring cry, 'tis he!

Approv'd by all, this judgment is decreed,
None can in *Yates's* parts his fame exceed;
In ev'ry public character he draws,
He toils not to extort a vain applause;
Nature to worth has mingled so much art,
He stands unrival'd in each varied part,
Thro' nature's aid to laughter gives a birth,
And exquisitely charms the soul to mirth.
Be *Yates* then as an actor foremost plac'd,
Who yields delight, and never palls the taste,
Who feels the meaning of each word refin'd,
And wakes to extacy the slumb'ring mind;

The next who stands upon the roll of fame,
King, as a great comedian, we may name,
For surely none his excellence surpasses,
In *Prattle*, *Ogilby*, but chief in *Brass*;
He copies nature with so keen an art,
So strikingly performs the brazen part,

That from the thronging auditors he draws,
An universal and deserv'd applause.

Perhaps some author, of much greater fame
Than what at present dignifies my name,
May say I have his rising worth misplac'd,
And shewn a want of judgment and of taste,
Display'd his talents in its weakest part,
And left untouch'd the beauties of his heart ;
Yet I must own in that peculiar roll,
A something finds a passage to the soul,
A something more than I can well descry,
Plays round the heart, and sparkles in the eye,
Grafts on the mind an exquisite delight,
And charms in rapture the astonish'd sight.

When double talents in conjunction join,
To make a man in either talent shine ;
If native beauties thro' dramatic care,
Experience polishes above compare,

Let envy cease to rail—be malice dead,
While justice puts the wreath on *Vernon's* head,
Adorns his brow with all theatric grace,
And fixes merit in its proper place :
'Tis hard to judge in these censorious days,
Whether *Macbeth* deserves our warmest praise,
Or whether *Sharpe* from each spectator draws
More fix'd attention or more just applause.

If words or sentences such worth betray,
What must to feeling souls his voice convey ?
While vocal trills in dying warbles shake,
And melting souls the soft impression take ;
Then is it while on excellence we gaze,
Admire in wonder, and in justice praise ;
Returning echoes tunefully refin'd,
Dwell on the ears and hang upon the mind,
Expel in mirth the lethal sting of care,
And trembling sweetly, soar and die in air.

Since heav'n to ev'ry man has not assign'd
An equal force of genius and of mind,
Let *Palmer* peaceably the laurel wear,
And tho' no first, be deem'd a second play'r ;
For if there are whose merit his excel,
Yet in some parts he acts extremely well,
Allow that when in *Rule a Wife* he plays,
The *Copper Captain* well deserves our praise :
Does not each feature, rising on his face,
Search into nature, and her meaning trace ?
With such expressive, such energetic force,
Few act it better, many act it worse.

Here truth and merit consecrate to fame
The following actor, and record his name.
In *Jobson's* form—*Love* has to praise pretence,
Who strongly represents the author's sense,

Charms each beholder with that careless air,
That honest awkward aspects cobblers wear ;
If imperfections may in him be seen,
Which make him languid in a tragic scene,
While others at inferior actors rail,
And falsehood more than equity prevail,
Their's be the task such talents to deride,
Mine is to praise, and trifling errors hide,
By nature taught, I follow still this plan,
To spare, if possible, my brother-man.

If nature heaves to see a great man fail
In points where malice never should prevail,
To see a man, who, tho' with talents born,
Employs them meanly, and excites our scorn,
Why did the author, whose unmanner'd pen,
Attacks the persons, not the faults of men,

Cast such farcaſtic sneers on *Dod* alone,
For nature's imperfections, not his own ?
How baſe, how fervile, how extremely mean,
Is it on nature's ſtamp to vent our ſpleen,
Since ſtrait or crooked, black or brown, or fair,
Heaven made us all, and made us as we are.
Read *Theſpis* o'er, and then conceive who can,
How ſuch a wit could prove ſo weak a man,
Whoſe talents in each well wrote nervous line,
Like blazing ſtars in matchleſs luſtre ſhine,
Could, loſt to candour, ſacrifice the praiſe,
Which men of parts in every boſom raiſe ;
I own it grieves me when I recollect,
(Since but the envious nourish this defect)
A man whoſe ever memorable name,
Already ſtands upon the roll of fame,
Should fully thus a ſcience moſt refin'd,
And blaſt the laurels which his temples bind.

If

If *Dod* is not with *Garrick's* pow'rs possest,
What then!—blame not—*Dod* strives to do his best;
And tho' I shall not on his merits dwell,
Few we confess perform each part so well,
And nature pleading in the actor's cause,
Décrees him not unworthy great applause.

If merit is entitled to renown,
On *Weston* we may place the laurel'd crown;
There is a beauty in each part he plays,
Worthy attention and unfeigned praise:
In *Scrub* he never fails to charm the heart,
To shine with all the pow'r of native art;
Blest with a mem'ry he can always trust,
In speech and action he is ever just,
Studious to please, we never see or hear,
What either pains the sight, or shocks the ear;

And

And could my youthful unexperienc'd verse,
Justly the echo of his fame rehearse,
I would impartially my lays devote,
And tune for *Weston* each poetic note.

Havard and *Hurst*, tho' not so highly priz'd,
Possess a genius not to be despis'd ;
And tho' they have no great pretence to fame,
Each as a decent actor we may name.

Curst be the Bard who freely pours his thoughts,
And enviously describes another's faults,
Whatever star, replete with erring pride,
Inspires his pen his neighbour to deride,
In dark oblivion be his numbers curst,
As proofs of meanness, and of crimes the worst.
What right has any, be him e'er so great,
To mock another's foibles, form, or gait ?

Or why should *K*——, since we differ all,
Leering on *Moody*—mud-ey'd *Moody* call?
Satire deserves applause, if justly drawn,
But if unjust, excites our highest scorn;
For, like a mirror to the naked view,
It should not shew a spot but what was true;
Should not, to satisfy conceited pride,
Censure too rashly, or too soon decide:
Where truth impartially directs the pen,
The critic has a right to judge of men;
Uncheck'd, to pour out every honest thought,
And tell his brother of an actual fault.

'Tis true each man is not with genius blest,
Nor with the same attractive form possest;
Yet say, are nature's errors a disgrace,
And view we worth but in a handsome face?

Mistaken

Mistaken K——, drop the critic's pen,
Know first yourself, before you judge of men,
Blame without rancour, act the honest part,
Weigh well each word, and speak it from the heart ;
'Tis then, and then alone, the Poet's lays,
May claim our warmest, our sincerest praise.

Wherefore does K—— on mankind reflect,
Has K—— got no blemish, no defect ?
What do we see, if we his form survey ?
A little shapeless lump of human clay,
A statue built upon so coarse a plan,
The porter must appear do all he can ;
In spite of dress, embroidery or lace,
His native meanness stares us in the face ;
Not all his tinsel arts deceive our eyes,
Or hide the low mechanic in disguise.

But

But now the Muse with equity will scan
The actors talents, and discard the man :
Players, like other men, by nature's laws,
Are not alike deserving of applause ;
Yet studious nature, with the nicest care,
Bestows on all a just, a proper share,
And here must own, if I express my thoughts,
Moody has both his merits and his faults ;
For he, no more than other men, can be
From ev'ry folly, ev'ry error free :
But yet in ev'ry thing as on the stage,
Most things which charm our sight, our soul engage,
I think his humour finds the lucky art,
Tho' " brags in front, and marble all in heart,"
To wake from lethargy the drowsy mind,
And force a smile from all to joy inclin'd ;
Then, while he thus can please upon the stage,
'Tis our's to scorn the snarling critic's rage,

Applaud

Applaud his talents, while our mirth they raise,
And give him, where we ought, the greatest praise.

The careful *Ackman*, blest with native ease,
Strives all he can, the audience to please ;
Tho' small his rolls, yet in those trifling parts,
He finds a method to engage our hearts,
And frequently from all, in justice draws,
A warm, a candid, and a true applause.

Bensly and *Cautberly* may also claim
No little title to theatric fame,
And if the Muse may judge, it plain appears,
Perfection they will gain in length of years.

Parsons has merit, which in all he plays
A fund of genius and of worth displays,

True to the author's sense, he charms the sight,
And fails not admiration to excite ;
Few on the stage (if we survey) we find,
Have a more clear, a more conceptive mind ;
And that in justice to his rising fame,
We think he has a right applause to claim.

But here tho' *Burton's* and tho' *Bransby's* parts
Have not an equal power to move our hearts,
Tho' neither excellence or native ease
Can strike our fancy, or our judgment please,
Yet in some things we may espouse their cause,
And grant them, tho' a faint, a just applause ;
Nor led by any weak mistaken pride,
Dismay the players, or their faults deride.

Tho' *Baddely* we deem no foremost play'r,
Yet of the gen'rous bays may claim a share ;

With

With most amazing and peculiar art
He acts, with matchless skill, the Frenchman's part :
In *Paris* none can *Baddely* excel,
For foreign tones, and for performing well.

Aickin, tho' yet not excellent in all,
May, for applause, on ev'ry person call ;
A dawn of talents seems in him to rise,
Which even now enchants our ravish'd eyes,
And time, that every thing in life refines,
May ripen what as yet but faintly shines.

But now ye Sacred Nine, with utmost care,
Inspire the Bard, to paint the tender fair ;
Teach the weak numbers of the heav'n-born art
To flow sincerely from the feeling heart,
To follow justice, more than nature's laws,
Nor partially confer unjust applause ;

But

But while the unexperienc'd Muse surveys
Such as deserve her censure or her praise,
Let her not suffer from the critic's sneer,
If now and then some trifling faults appear ;
For where impulsive nature bears a part,
'Tis hard to contradict the tender heart,
But yet more difficult it is to trace
The faults of woman in a beauteous face,
For powerful nature, pleading in her cause,
Disarms our candour, and confers applause ;
In spite of reason, or it's boasted art,
Woman will find a passage to the heart,
And make our judgment, as a fact, declare,
None find a blemish in the blooming fair.

First *Arne* and *Vincent* may in justice claim
A due proportionate degree of fame,

Equal

Equal in merit, each with lustre shine,
And waft to ears a melody divine;
With magic art enchant, attract the sight,
And melt our souls with exquisite delight.

If tender strains, and unaffected ease
Are attributes which never fail to please,
If beauty, or at least a handsome face,
A form majestic, with each female grace,
Demand a title to theatric fame,
Who more than *Baddely* can have a claim?
Enliv'ning sounds, with most amazing art,
Play in the soul, and flutter in the heart,
Lull into rapture the attentive mind,
And stamp on memory a voice refin'd.

The next is *Reynolds*, in the acting train,
Who sounds melodiously each tender strain;

H

We

We feel a something in this pleasing fair,
We cannot well to any thing compare ;
For in her speaking her perfection's such,
She never can enchant our ears too much ;
She has a power ev'ry bosom warms,
And greatly stealing on the fancy, charms.

In *Barry's* soothing tones, how mystic art
Conveys the soft impression to the heart ;
How she can animate the drowsy breast
May be conceiv'd, but cannot be express'd ;
For where no imperfection we can trace
Either in person, talent, air, or grace,
The Muse may safely consecrate to fame
A worth, which even envy cannot blame.

To *Pritchard* now the Muse devotes her lays,
Whose merit all confess deserves our praise :

Can

Can any one excite our pity more
Than *Pritchard's* moving tone in hapless *Shore* ?
Does she not raise in ev'ry breast a sigh,
And cause a tear to flow from ev'ry eye ?
With soft compassion ev'ry bosom fires,
And e'en to pity, savages inspires.
'Tis hard to say, if most she moves our hearts
In tragic strains, or in her comic parts ;
For excellent in both, she charms alike,
And can, with equal force, our fancy strike.

Hopkins, no novice in dramatic art,
Performs exceeding well, each studied part,
Knows how to raise in ev'ry single roll,
A kind of admiration thro' the whole ;
And tho' pre-eminence she cannot claim,
Yet, as an actress, we revere her name,

Con-

Confess her worth, and candid in her cause,
Confer no little share of our applause.

Who can commit a more unmanly act,
Than weak defenceless woman to detract?
For frail by nature, she should rather move
The candid Bard to pity, than reprove.
Could woman, like a man, a wrong resent,
We then might openly our malice vent;
But since her texture is by nature made
To fly to man for shelter and for aid,
'Tis ours the weaker vessels faults to spare,
And urg'd by nature, screen the helpless fair.

Tho' some maliciously or vainly strive,
To tax the merit of ingenious *Clive*;
Tho' envious pens against the actresses rail,
And falsehoods more than equity prevail,

Still

Still while the trumpet of resounding fame
Applauds what ignorance alone can blame,
Let *Clive* among the first the laurel wear,
And be consider'd as a foremost play'r.
Altho' a learned author boldly says
She has no taste, no sense, in all she plays,
If I impartially may speak my sense,
I think to both she has a just pretence,
And here, with due submission, beg to name
Lethe's fine Lady to confirm the fame.

When in some happy personage we find
A fertile talent, with a copious mind,
A rising genius, which to all appears,
Will excellently shine in riper years;
If from such tokens we may justly dare
To pass a judgment on a youthful play'r,

Let here the Muse from her experience hope,
Such native gifts will soon distinguish *Pope*,
Make dawning merit, like a comet rise,
And in a streaming ray amaze our eyes.

In acting, as in ev'ry other state,
From practice we derive our being great ;
And since to practice we the issue trust,
To damn at hazard, is to be unjust.
The damask rose, while budding on the tree,
We doubt its beauty, till its bloom we see ;
But when its spreading charms, in course of time,
Declare the lovely flow'r is in its prime,
We prize the root, and with peculiar care
Nourish the tree which thus perfumes the air.
In spite of malice, or the envious Bard
Who never yet to merit paid regard ;

In spite of all ignoble pens declare,
Falsely to prejudice the youthful fair,
I must insist, no one could ever trace
One mark of low-life meanness on her face ;
And if to justice we refer her cause,
Justice itself will crown her with applause.

But here the gentle *Palmer* has a claim,
A rank above the common rank to fame ;
Exact in all the rules a parent taught,
'Tis seldom she commits a trifling fault ;
Just in her action, elegance and ease,
She never fails the auditor to please,
And that which seems but half perfection now,
Time shortly will with excellence endow.

Here next let graceful *Abington* be plac'd,
For sprightly humour, and dramatic taste ;

For

For sounds harmonious, which in ev'ry part
 Dwell on the mind, and captivate the heart ;
 And might the Poet judge of future days,
 He thinks her merit will command our praise ;
 For that which now our fix'd attention draws,
 Will share in time unspeakable applause.

At length the weaken'd Muse presumes to name
 An actress greater than the voice of fame,
 An actress far beyond our skill to raise,
 Possess'd with more than we have pow'r to praise ;
 Where find we one who shines in all her parts,
 And fills with rapture our enchanted hearts ?
 In ev'ry passage, ev'ry soul elates,
 Or can in tragedy compare with *Yates* ?
 When lost *Hermione* relates her woes,
 And ev'ry heart with secret anguish glows,

When

When to *Orestes* she her wrongs imparts,
Disclosing how her breast for *Pyrrhus* smarts,
Mark how conflicting passions rend her breast,
By love and hatred equally deprest ;
One moment, all her love to hatred turns,
The next, with ardor for the Sov'reign burns ;
Thus pausing in a world of doubt and pain,
She dooms him dead, and then recants again ;
But when *Orestes* has perform'd the act,
And 'tis too late her orders to retract,
Behold the rising madness in her face,
Pluck from her aspect each attractive grace,
Aborb'd in thought, the image of despair,
She tears in agony her flowing hair,
Curfes *Orestes*, and the fatal hand
Too prompt to execute the harsh command.

K

Now

Now Muse forbear—from Drury bend your way,
And leave to candour this, your first essay,
Submit the trial to the public's care,
Who may, perhaps, the feeble author spare:
He owns 'twas daring, in such times as these,
Fearless to venture on the critic seas,
Where wrecks are common, censure ever sure,
And sometimes wit itself is not secure;
Yet as he will to public justice trust,
He dares the critic, while his cause is just,
Requires no greater praise, no greater fame,
Than what he may from public judgment claim.

Weak is the Bard, because a Poet born,
An actor's person to deride or scorn;
Are there no subjects to acquire a name,
But such as tend to injure or defame?

Or

Or why should any virulently prate,
More against actors than against the state?
Each man alike endeavours to maintain
A reputation free from blur or stain,
And to each man his portion of renown,
To him's as dear, as theirs who wear a crown.

But should the public grace my youthful name,
And kindly grant the smallest rank of fame;
When "*Beard's* light squadrons" in the field appear,
(Unaw'd by threats, untterrify'd by fear,)
Myself will view the battle in array,
And wait with pleasure the approaching fray.

Fly *K*—— quick, from Albion's peaceful shore;
Nor meanly strive to injure merit more;
Perhaps thy natal place, thy natal clime,
May cure that scribbling itch thou hast to rhyme.

Confess,

Confess, tho' late, and own the maxim just,
 To satirise ignobly, gives disgust:
 Hadst thou been blest with such a lucky thought,
 K—, perhaps, had been exempt from fault,
 Or would you still retain a blameless name,
 Return, Hibernian Bard, from whence you came,
 There pass in quiet thy remaining days,
 In writing Elegies, or mending Stays.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

- Page 3. line 3. after the word *lays*, a comma, not a full point.
 4. line 17. for *charm'd* read *charm'd*.
 10. line 14. for *comdian* read *comedian*.
 11. line 7. for *talents* read *talent*.
 11. line 8. for *heart* read *art*.
 14. line 6. for *fallhood* read *fallhoods*.
 20. line 2. for *actors* read *actor's*.
 26. line 6. for *greatly* read *gently*.

